

Devonshire Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105154
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336434
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Westington HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Porter
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, which included a small number of extended observations. They observed registration periods, lunchtimes and playtimes and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked in detail at a range of the school's documentation including its self-evaluation, school improvement plans, headteacher's reports to the governing body; reports on the school's work by external agencies; a range of school policies, including those on safeguarding and health and safety; the school's monitoring reports on the quality of teaching and learning; its internal assessment and target setting data and the latest, unconfirmed, national test results.

Inspectors looked in detail at the provision for a small number of potentially vulnerable students. They also analysed 166 parental questionnaires along with those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- outcomes for different groups of pupils
- the progress and attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1
- pupils attainment in mathematics
- the amount of progress made on the areas for improvement since the last inspection.

At the time of this school inspection, a parallel inspection was undertaken of the 'Kare 4 kids' provision which shares the same site. The report for this inspection can be found on the Ofsted website

Information about the school

Devonshire Road is a larger than average primary school which serves a diverse area. A quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost half of the pupils are of ethnic minority heritage and a third speak English as an additional language although of this group only 36 are at the early stages of learning English. The school receives specific funding for pupils of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage. The school has a very small number of Refugees and Asylum seekers and children who are looked after. Since the last inspection, the school has managed a large number of temporary, contracted staff.

The school has gained the following awards: the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools status, Active Mark and the Nurturing Environment award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the leadership, management and governance of the school; ensuring that the statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding are met; the provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils; improving the levels of attendance of the pupils with the lowest attendance and the use of assessment in lessons and as a tool for managers to monitor and increase pupils' progress.

Despite some progress since the last inspection, notably in the management of pupils' behaviour and punctuality, and despite the sustained support of the local authority, overall the school has made too little progress. Work remains to be done on three of the five areas for improvement identified at that time. The large majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the work of the school. One parent wrote a comment that was typical of several, 'we have felt supported and feel that staff are available should we need them.' However, a small minority of parents reported concerns about the school; some listed a number of issues, including aspects of the school's provision for caring for, guiding and supporting their child. Inspectors share parents' concerns. The school does not monitor pupils regularly or well enough so does not know how well they are doing. Responsibility for this lies with the leaders and managers of the school who, despite their undoubted commitment to the children, do not display sufficient clarity of vision and focus to move the school on to a higher level of performance and display a lack of urgency in dealing with this. The school's evaluation of its work is over generous. Strategic oversight of the school is lacking. Management systems are insecure and information is not used well enough to tackle areas of priority. Teachers who are new to management roles are not guided well and, consequently, their time is used inefficiently. Governors are highly committed to the school, but are too dependent upon information from the school to be able to hold it to account.

Pupils' outcomes are, however, satisfactory overall. They reach broadly average standards by the time they leave the school, although their progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is uneven, as seen in the lessons observed and in pupils' books. Several parents raised concerns about their child's progress and inspectors share these concerns. The school's overall attendance is well below the national average and for some pupils it is very low indeed. In the school year 2008-09, 99 pupils had an attendance rate of below 90% and 56 had attendance rates below 85%. Not all of these were pupils taking extended

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holidays abroad. Some year groups in the school have much lower attendance rates than others.

The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory although very variable. Poor use of assessment data by the school, a lack of rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' progress and weak guidance to teaching and support staff, several of whom are temporary or newly qualified, account for the variability in teaching. Although the school has a recently established system for gathering pupils' results annually and setting targets for their progress, the information is not used consistently to sharpen all teaching. In the national test figures for Key Stage 2, no group of pupils stands out as doing particularly better, or worse, than any other but the school's own analysis of the performance of groups is weak and so it is not fully informed about how groups and individuals are doing on a more regular basis.

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Even though the fact that it is currently staffed by temporary teachers, the systems in place are well enough embedded to ensure that the children make good progress and are well cared for.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school.
- Ensure that statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding are met.
- Improve the provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils.
- Raise the level of attendance of poor attenders by at least 5% by the end of the academic year.
- Improve the use of assessment in lessons and as a tool for managers to monitor and increase pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils engage in lessons and are keen to do well. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and respond well to the various strategies that staff employ to ensure good behaviour. In lessons where progress is satisfactory, typically, pupils spend too much time rehearsing knowledge or skills they already have and completing short tasks rather than gaining much new learning or engaging in longer, more challenging activities. Where learning is better, pupils work at a faster pace and strive to meet challenging targets that are set for them. In some lessons, pupils' errors and misunderstandings are not picked up and these persist over time, so that the progress made is patchy. An over-reliance on self-assessment and peer assessment by pupils, in some instances, means that teachers are not always aware of how much pupils have actually learnt in the lesson, or whether they have learnt the right thing. In a Year 6 lesson on decimal fractions, for example, most pupils assessed themselves as having done well, when in fact a significant number had not grasped the concept being taught. Discussion with the pupils revealed considerable gaps in their knowledge and misconceptions. They were not secure in their knowledge that decimals are fractions or

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parts of numbers; they could not place decimal fractions in the number system with units, tens and hundreds and did not understand that to the right of the decimal point the numbers became ten times smaller. Pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities make similar rates of progress as their classmates.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe in school and are well looked after; most of the pupils who returned questionnaires also supported this view, but there was a small number who commented on bullying and several parents raised this as a grave concern. Pupils have very high regard for the learning mentor and are confident that they would be able to talk to her should a problem arise. 'She builds your confidence up,' is how one pupil described her support. The school's focus on developing pupils' emotional and social skills has impacted very positively on pupils' behaviour and their emotional well-being. Although a number of parents expressed concern about behaviour, during this inspection inspectors saw only good behaviour. 'We work as a team' and 'we get on well with each other' are just some of the comments from pupils. Pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Over a half of them take a school meal and all classes have two hours of physical education per week. However, only a small proportion of pupils take part in school activities outside the teaching day. They take on some responsibilities within school and the older pupils act as good role models for the younger ones. Pupils are developing strong social skills and understand the consequences of their actions. They are respectful of the various groups represented within the school and work well together. There are missed opportunities for the pupils to mix with children from the school for pupils with hearing impairment that shares the site and also the pre-school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory but it is too variable. This is because the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by leaders and managers is not treated as a priority. During the last school year, with the support of the local authority, the headteacher and deputy undertook lesson observations. Scrutiny of these records reveals too much focus on the teaching and structures of the lesson and too little on the progress that pupils are making and the learning taking place. The good practice that does exist within the school is not shared and developed. The organisation of teaching in Year 1 is inefficient and impedes progress for too many pupils; a concern expressed by some parents.

The curriculum is satisfactory. All national curriculum subjects are covered. The subject specialist teaching that the school buys in, for example, for singing, is of high quality and much enjoyed by the pupils. Class timetables are not as well planned as they should be. There are two breaks in the morning, for example, which lead in some cases to lessons being curtailed just as pupils are getting motivated and an acute loss of teaching time. In some year groups, core subjects are placed towards the end of the day when pupils are tired and not performing at their best.

The school's provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is inadequate because safeguarding requirements are not met. Adults in the school are kind, caring and supportive of the pupils in their care and the children recognise this. The school takes seriously its role in supporting looked after children and those who are involved with other agencies and its case files are well maintained. A few parents though express concern about elements of this aspect of the school's provision, including: the school's arrangements for pupils' transition to new year groups and the quality of the information parents receive about how well their child is doing. Some of the uncertainty is the result of factors outside the school's control, for example, having to advertise for, and employ, temporary staff, but inspectors agree that the school's information on how well pupils are doing is not as robust as it should be.

Despite some recent improvements, as a result of the efforts of the committed administrative staff and learning mentor, the impact of the school's work on the high levels of absence has been limited and too many pupils are missing too much education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

There is no doubt that the headteacher and deputy headteacher are deeply committed to the school and to the pupils. They have had a significant impact in improving behaviour and strengthening pupils' social and emotional development. However, there is no corresponding clarity of purpose and direction in respect of the academic side of the school's work. School improvement planning lacks rigour. Line management of the assistant headteachers is weak. They do not have a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning within the subjects for which they are responsible, across the school, because they are not involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning in those subjects. They have, however, identified areas of weaknesses in the subjects through the analysis of previous test results and reported these back to teaching staff. Subject plans are in the process of being adapted to allow teachers to devote more time to improving areas of weakness. However, the process for monitoring and adapting planning is too slow and remote for the pupils currently in the school and it is not clear how senior leaders know what has been the impact of any changes they have instigated.

Governors are also highly committed to the school and keen to play their part. They recognise that they are too reliant on the information that is provided to them by the school's leadership team. They undertake training regularly including, for some, training on safer recruitment and safeguarding. Nevertheless, in respect of specific requirements relating to safeguarding, the governing body has not fulfilled its statutory duties. The governing body does not challenge the school sufficiently. The school does, however, fulfil its statutory duty in respect of promoting community cohesion.

The school has a recently developed electronic system for collecting information on how well different groups are doing. It is not yet used well enough; but, in the case of the two groups for whom the school provides additional support, pupils with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, both groups make similar progress to their peers.

The school sends out regular, informative news bulletins to parents and holds regular parents' meetings and open sessions. It has an alert text messaging system to contact all parents quickly. Its means of communicating with parents is as one would expect. Three quarters of parents are very happy with the school's work. Others believe that the school does not take their concerns seriously. The school has some work to do to win over a number of parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides well for the children in its care. Children enter the Reception Class with a range of knowledge and skills, but overall their attainment is broadly in line with expectations. They make good progress as a result of well planned and well organised provision and consequently the majority meet or exceed the early learning goals for this age group. They enter Year 1 well prepared. The key workers know the children well and are well deployed to support children's learning. The children are happy and well looked after. The new outdoor area is a major addition and contributes to the children's physical development and well being.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

166 parents returned the questionnaires. Of these, the large majority were happy overall with the school's work. They appreciate that staff are approachable. One parent wrote, 'I feel I can approach the school at any time if I have any concerns about my

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child.' Many acknowledged the individual support they received from staff in the school. Several commented on how much their child enjoyed school. However, about a quarter of parents who returned questionnaires expressed a range of concerns, indicated either by disagreeing with the statements in the questionnaire or in their written comments. These concerns included behaviour, bullying, their child's progress, how well the school meets their child's needs, how well the school listens to their views and the arrangements for transition from one class to another. Inspectors share parents' concerns about several aspects of the school's provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Devonshire Road Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 166 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 401 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	55	68	41	6	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	95	57	65	39	2	1	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	45	73	44	9	5	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	38	81	49	10	6	6	4
The teaching is good at this school	69	42	84	51	2	1	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	43	81	49	6	4	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	44	83	50	6	4	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	62	37	85	51	7	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	38	84	51	8	5	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	39	82	49	8	5	5	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	31	94	57	7	4	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	71	43	84	51	4	2	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	52	67	40	3	2	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Devonshire Road Primary School, Bolton, BL1 4ND

My colleagues and I visited your school recently to see how well you are doing and to see how well the school looks after you and helps you in your work. We were very pleased to meet you and have the chance to talk to many of you. Thank you so much for looking after us and making us feel welcome. We enjoyed seeing you in your lessons, in the playground and at lunchtime, finding out what you like about school. These are the things we found out.

- Most of you enjoy school and say you feel safe.
- The behaviour in school has improved and so has the punctuality (this means that not as many of you are late for school as used to be the case).
- The children in the Reception Class are doing well.
- You enjoy your singing lessons.

We decided that your school could be doing better than it is. Although many of your parents are happy with the school, too many are not. We have decided that your school needs some extra help to make things better and we have given your school a notice to improve. This means that inspectors will visit your school again to see how it is doing and to help it improve as quickly as possible. The inspectors will talk to the adults in the school and will visit your lessons to see how you are getting on. There are some very important things to do with keeping you safe that must be sorted out and inspectors will also want to make sure that you are being well looked after. Inspectors will also look at how well the teachers know how you are doing and whether they use all the information they have about you to make sure you make good progress.

Another important thing that they will be looking at is the amount of absence some of you have. Too many of you are away from school far too much and this means you cannot possibly do well in your school work.

I am sure that you will continue to work hard and to help the teachers make the changes that are necessary to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Westington

Her Majesty's Inspector

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